

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0089] A system and method for controlling interference affecting user terminals in a communications network, such as satellite terminals in a satellite communications network, by establishing and using virtual cells which are independent of the cells formed by the spot beams generated by the satellite. The system and method employs an interference detector which is adapted to detect interference in the network which interferes with an ability of at least one user terminal to communicate in the network, and an interference source identifier which is adapted to identify a source of the interference by deactivating at least one select group of the user terminals based on criteria independent of the respective cell or cells in which the user terminals reside, to locate those terminals whose ability to communicate in the network is being interfered with by the detected interference. The interference source identifier can deactivate the select group or groups of terminals based on criteria such as user terminals which are all located within a portion of a single cell, user terminals which are located within multiple cells, user terminals which are all located in a respective geographic region having a size independent of a size of any of said cells, user terminals having data receiving addresses within a particular range of addresses, user terminals having user terminal identifiers within a particular range of user terminal identifiers, and user terminals having a particular supplier identifier which identifies a supplier of the user terminals, to name a few.

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